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## NEWS AND NOTES

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### THE STRATFORD CONFERENCES

The announcements of the English Conference to be held at Stratford-upon-Avon during the first week of August drew so many replies that it was necessary to arrange for a second conference to be held the following week. A letter from Miss Macardle received early in June stated that so many Americans had already accepted her invitation that no more could be accommodated.

Judging from the reports in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, in the *Journal of Education* (London) and in the *Educational Times*, the conferences were highly successful. The American members showed their appreciation at the end of the first week by presenting through Professor Thomas a series of resolutions commending Miss Macardle's efforts as secretary and suggesting that similar meetings be arranged for each year. An expression of the same sort on behalf of the British members was made by Professor J. H. Fowler of Clifton College. Among other things he urged that the general committee contain members to represent primary, secondary, and university education, the English Association of Great Britain, the National Council of Teachers of English of the United States, French and German associations of teachers of English, the League of the Empire, and colonial associations of teachers. It has since been suggested that the Conference unite with the National Council to form an international association. The fitting opportunity for such a step will be offered by the meeting of the Council in Oakland, California, in August of next year in connection with the International Congress of Education to be held at that time.

Space will not permit of mentioning all who took part in the Stratford conferences. The list contains many well-known names. Sir Sidney Lee, president and chairman of the General Committee, in his inaugural address, commented upon the war cloud which loomed on the horizon and reminded his hearers that the Conference was of no less importance on account of this shadow. He offered as a motto for the Conference an utterance of John Brinsley, the Elizabethan pedagogue: "The purity and elegance of our own language is to be esteemed chief part of the honour of our nation, which we all ought to advance as much as in us lieth."

The first paper was read by Mr. J. H. Fowler, of Clifton College, on "The Study of Shakespeare in Schools." He urged that plays be first read as wholes, and that appreciation rather than erudition be the end sought. Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie read a paper on "Poetry, the Education of Consciousness," and another on "Word Values." Mr. John Drinkwater urged the "Value of Poetry in Education," declaring that a materialistic age is failing to teach children the fundamental principle of life, the meaning of beauty. He would have numerous companies of players organized to present Shakespeare in all the villages. Miss Elsie Fogerty spoke on "Co-ordinative Speech Training" and Professor Jones on "The Use of Phonetics." Especially effective appears to have been a paper on "The Appreciation of Poetry" by Miss C. L. Thomson, editor of the *Journal of English Studies*. Reports of experiences in actual class work were made by several, including Miss Laura Smithson and Miss Amice Macdonell. W. H. D. Rouse, of the Perse School, aroused the audience with a spirited attack upon the highly annotated editions of standard selections published by the Cambridge Press. The British editors seem to think this to have been not wholly fair or wise.

The Americans who took part in the program evidently upheld our traditions and had a good hearing. Professor Thomas, of Minnesota, read a paper on "Oral Composition," embodying the results of the experimenting which has been going on in this country during the past decade. He made clear the value of oral work and showed how different types of students should be dealt with. Professor Clark of Chicago, with characteristic enthusiasm, moved his hearers with a plea for the enjoyment of the "Music of Poetry." He declared that all good poetry must contain three fundamental qualities, melody, "tone color," and rhythm, and gave numerous striking illustrations of the values of these elements. The third speaker was Professor Clapp, of Lake Forest, who explained to the Conference the nature and purpose of our National Council and the characteristic features and organization of our schools. He then stated that he believed that the next step to be taken by Americans is to provide for the proper training of children's voices. He felt that in respect to tone and speech production American voices are distinctly inferior to those commonly heard in England.

No doubt the *Journal* will be able to offer in a later number some of the personal impressions of the American members of the Conference. As the papers read at the various sessions appear in print due notice will be made of them, so that as much good as possible may be derived from the first of what promises to be a series of notable gatherings.

## THE COMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL ENGLISH

During the past year the Council Committee on Elementary-School English has enrolled about one thousand subcommittees in about thirty states, for the handling of its exhaustive questionnaire, and is now ready for active operations. This preliminary organization of helpers was made necessary because of the extent and thoroughness of the work proposed. Each state organized has its state chairman and from twenty-five to one hundred local committees; the local committees to gather the material, and the state chairman to make the preliminary tabulations. All postage and printing are provided for by the United States Bureau of Education.

While the number of auxiliary committees is now very nearly sufficient for the end in view, a few states remain to be organized, and in every state there is opportunity for any who wish their own school or schools to be represented to enrol among the co-workers for that state. Copies of the questionnaire will be furnished for that purpose as long as they last, on application to the chairman.

The entire questionnaire consists of three parts of four pages each. The first part calls for statistics on the labor and cost of all elementary-school subjects; the second for details of administrative experience and opinion; and the third for details of teaching theory and practice with regard to English subjects. Each set of three is intended for report from one grade only; hence a complete report from one school will require the use of eight sets or twenty-four separate papers. A report from a single grade may, however, include more than one school; and if in many instances two or more schools may be included in a single set of reports, the weight and value of the results will be correspondingly increased. The difficulty of including several schools will be greatest in the statistical part of the report; and to overcome it, the local committee in charge may find it convenient to issue special slips for information on certain points.

The statistical matter for the first sheet may be furnished by anyone who can spare the necessary time. The information asked for in the second or administrative sheet will usually come from a school supervisor or through an administrative office. The information for the third sheet must be furnished by an experienced teacher of English in each of the several grades. The local committee may therefore include representatives from all of these classes; or it may be a small committee which will call upon a large number of persons for the necessary help.

Bureau penalty envelopes are furnished for the return of the blanks. Further instructions as to the details of each set of questions are given in the questionnaire itself.

*For the committee,*

EDWIN M. HOPKINS, *chairman*, Lawrence, Kan.

*Special Collaborator, U.S. Bureau of Education*

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### THE "RECALL" OF ENGLISH CREDIT

It is no longer hoped that all college graduates will write with force and elegance, but that they shall possess a moderate facility in the practical applications of grammar and spelling still seems a reasonable expectation. The expectation is, however, every year disappointed, to the chagrin of college teachers and to the apparent vindication of the critics of the college in business life. Various remedies have been tried, the simplest and most common being to raise the standard or to increase the amount of required work in English. This may prevent the man who is either unwilling or unable to absorb the substance of an English course from getting a degree, but it is of no avail against the considerable number who pass in English with creditable rank and subsequently deteriorate. It is said that the backsliders are the ones who are chiefly responsible for the poor showing made by so many college graduates in English composition.

A novel and apparently effective means of inducing students to continue to pay attention to the quality of English they use in the written work of the later college years has recently been adopted by the College of the City of New York. It is the principle of the "recall" applied to English credit. If a student who has completed the regular English requirements is found at any time thereafter by any department to be slovenly or inaccurate in his written English, a part of his credit in that subject may be recalled and he may be required as a condition of his graduation to regain it by further work in English composition.

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